PEACE/WILLISTON
FISH & WILDLIFE
COMPENSATION
PROGRAM

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Program Overview and Strategic Direction (2001-2005)

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January 2003

PWFWCP Report No. 273

105-02378/

The Peace/Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program is a cooperative venture of BC Hydro and the provincial fish and wildlife management agencies, supported by funding from BC Hydro. The Program was established to enhance and protect fish and wildlife resources affected by the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams on the Peace River, and the subsequent creation of the Williston and Dinosaur Reservoirs.

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This report has been approved by the Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Steering Committee.

Citation: U. Bergmann, D. Cattanach, T. Down, and J. Metcalfe. 2003. Program Overview and Strategic Direction (2001-2005). Peace/ Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Report No. 273. 7 pp.

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PEACE/WILLISTON FISH AND WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a program overview and a condensed version of the strategic direction for the Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (PWFWCP). It briefly describes the historic background of the program, summarizes its overall strategic platform and the strategic objectives of each program area, and describes how the program is managed.

This strategic document represents the fruits of a five year review of the program and a forward looking planning process that focused on lessons learned and on opportunities associated with an updated and clarified vision and mission for the program, decisive strategic objectives, and a clear program scope.

The implementation of the plan over the next five years will mean a period of stability where the road map is clearly laid out and the program can proceed with achieving the set objectives. After the five-year period in 2005, we will revisit the strategy and determine whether a new course of action is warranted. In the meantime, there are opportunities for stakeholders to provide input on the annual operational plans by contacting staff.

Why Was the Program Created?

The creation of program for the protection or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat was set out in clause (n) of the water license for the Bennett Dam. The Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program was created in 1988 to compensate for impacts to fish and wildlife associated with the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams on the Peace River. It is a joint project of BC Hydro and the Provincial Fish and Wildlife Management Agencies.

What is the Program's Mandate?

The mission of the PWFWCP is to conserve and enhance fish, wildlife and their habitat within the program's boundaries. Specifically, the program aims to address any losses to fish, wildlife and recreation upstream of the Peace Canyon dam to achieve naturally diverse and abundant fish and wildlife populations in a healthy ecosystem, with artificial production as a secondary priority.

Consistent with the concept of sustainable development, the intent is to maintain the bio-diversity and recreational[1] opportunities and to improve fish and wildlife populations through the enhancement[2] of existing habitat.

For the purposes of the PWFWCP, both BC Hydro and MWALP acknowledge that the mandate of BC Hydro is the supply of electricity and the mandate of the Provincial Fish and Wildlife Management Agencies is the management of fish, wildlife and recreation. All programs in PWFWCP must be consistent with the long-term policies and plans of the program partners.

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[1] For the purpose of this Program, recreational opportunities refer to benefits derived from healthy fish and wildlife populations (viewing, hunting, fishing).

[2] Enhancement refers to both activities that increase the capacity of an ecosystem or population to fulfill a particular function and the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems or populations to an un-degraded condition.

What are the Geographical Boundaries for the Program
The geographical boundary for Fish and Wildlife projects is limited to the Williston Reservoir and Dinosaur Reservoir watersheds unless specifically approved by the Steering Committee. Given the scope of impacts related to the two watersheds, the Steering Committee does not envision to approve many projects outside of the boundaries. Such projects would be largely restricted to fisheries projects compensating for Peace Canyon impacts and wildlife projects where target species cross watershed boundaries and will occur in adjacent watersheds.

Why does the Program Focus on "Footprint" Issues
Based on the water license requirement, the compensation program will primarily address footprint issues, those one-time effects associated with constructing a facility and mostly related to loss of habitat. Where compelling reasons exist, however, the PWFWCP Steering Committee may consider projects that address operational impacts within the program area. Operational impacts (the effects of operating a facility on an ongoing basis) related to the operation of the WAC Bennett or Peace Canyon facilities are being addressed in the Water Use Planning process.

II. THE NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The program embarked on a strategic planning exercise beginning in 1999 to ensure that its resources would continue to be put to the highest priorities. The PWFWCP Strategic Platform for 2001-2005 establishes the underlying parameters for the whole program upon which the fish, wildlife, and communications components of the program built their own, specific, objectives and plans (therefore the term "platform").

The overall program strategic platform includes a vision, mission, core values and strategic objectives:

Vision (Our desired future):
Our vision is naturally diverse and abundant fish and wildlife populations in a healthy ecosystem.

Mission (Our Core Purpose):
The mission of the PWFWCP is to conserve and enhance fish, wildlife and their habitat in the program area for diverse benefits, now and in the future.

Core Values (Our Beliefs):
Integrity, Success and Achievement
Effective, Efficient, Principled Business Practices

Strategic Objectives:
The strategic objectives established in the 2001-2005 plan are as follows, in no specific order of priority:

1.0 Technically Sound Projects
- 1.1 To evaluate the status of fish, wildlife and their habitat using acceptable biological standards in order to provide input into enhancement management and protection decisions.
- 1.2 To undertake applied research in order to develop techniques and tools that can be used to maintain or enhance fish and wildlife populations.
- 1.3 To undertake measurable projects which conserve or enhance the abundance or diversity of native fish, wildlife and their habitat.

2.0 Evaluation and Accountability
- 2.1 To examine and select projects and work-plans to ensure the best use of available resources.
- 2.2 To establish criteria and measures in order to select, monitor, evaluate and report on the performance of projects and personnel.

3.0 Information Sharing
- 3.1 To share scientific information in order to improve our collective ability to benefit fish, wildlife and their habitat.
- 3.2 To communicate with the public and First Nations on an ongoing basis the goals, objectives and activities of the program in order to build awareness, understanding and support.

4.0 Public Participation and Partnership
- 4.1 To encourage public and First Nations involvement in the identification, development and delivery of projects in order to utilize local knowledge as well as build awareness of and commitment to the program.
- 4.2 To enter into partnerships that improve our ability to undertake projects consistent with the Strategic Plan.

III. APPLICATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLATFORM TO FISH, WILDLIFE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Aligned with these general principles, each subprogram developed their specific strategic objectives and five-year operational plans. The following section gives a very brief summary of the strategic direction for each subprogram. Figure 1 gives a visual depiction of how the strategic plans relate to each other.

What are the Priorities for the Fish Program Strategy
The goal is to conserve and enhance fish and their habitat in the program area to compensate for W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon hydroelectric development. The fish strategic plan is an

overview document and detailed activities planned for each year are laid out in operational plans. Both planning documents articulate the fish program's future direction.

The Fish Program's strategic objectives are, in no order of priority:

1. Contribute to the management of fish and their habitat
2. Develop a greater understanding of Northern aquatic ecosystems
3. Provide for a variety of angling opportunities
4. Promote public awareness, appreciation and understanding of Northern aquatic ecosystems

What are the Priorities for the Wildlife Program Strategy

The Wildlife Program goal is to support an ecosystem where priority wildlife species are abundant and *natural processes predominate*. *Natural processes* mean natural reproduction, predation, and succession as opposed to perpetual human intervention. *Predominate* is used for two reasons. There will always be anthropogenic effects and it is necessary to acknowledge annual or periodic activities (i.e. burning).

The following five strategic objectives will guide the work of the Wildlife program over the next five years (in no order of priority):

1. To maintain or increase abundance of priority wildlife species.
2. To explore and develop new techniques for the management or enhancement of wildlife populations and habitats.
3. To ensure that the research is accepted by the scientific community.
4. To ensure that the public is supportive of the wildlife program.

What are the Priorities for the Communication and Cooperation Strategy

Two items in the overall program strategic platform speak to communications and cooperation, namely *Information Sharing* and *Participation and Partnership*.

The following four strategic objectives provide the framework for communications operational strategies and actions:

1. Communication objectives:
   communication with interested parties on a regular basis to build awareness, understanding and support for the program; raising awareness of the conservation and protection issues that the program tries to address; sharing scientific information with other resource managers and users, and clarifying the respective roles of the partners involved in the program.
2. Consultation Objectives:
   Solicit input to add value to the program, and receive feedback on how input is being considered and utilized to improve the program.
3. Participation Objectives:
   Create opportunity for diverse groups and individuals to safely partake in the delivery of projects, and enable project managers to effectively use local and traditional knowledge and expertise to deliver on project objectives.

4. Partnership Objective:
   To enter into partnerships that improve our ability to undertake projects consistent with the program's strategic plan.

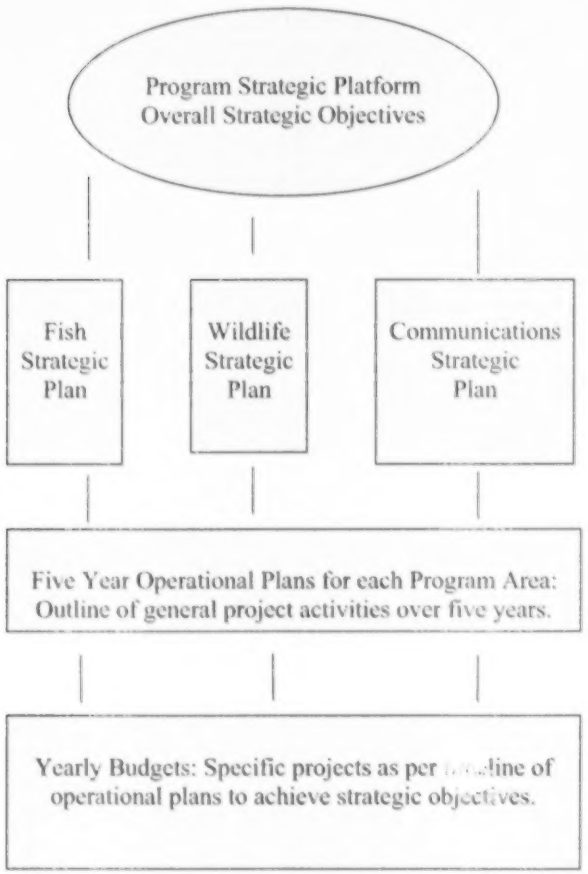
Program Strategic Platform
Overall Strategic Objectives
Fish Strategic Plan
Wildlife Strategic Plan
Communications Strategic Plan
Five Year Operational Plans for each Program Area: Outline of general project activities over five years.
Yearly Budgets: Specific projects as per outline of operational plans to achieve strategic objectives.

Figure 1: Relationship of Strategic and Operational Plans for the Compensation Program

4. Partnership Objective:
   To enter into partnerships that improve our ability to undertake projects consistent with the program's strategic plan.

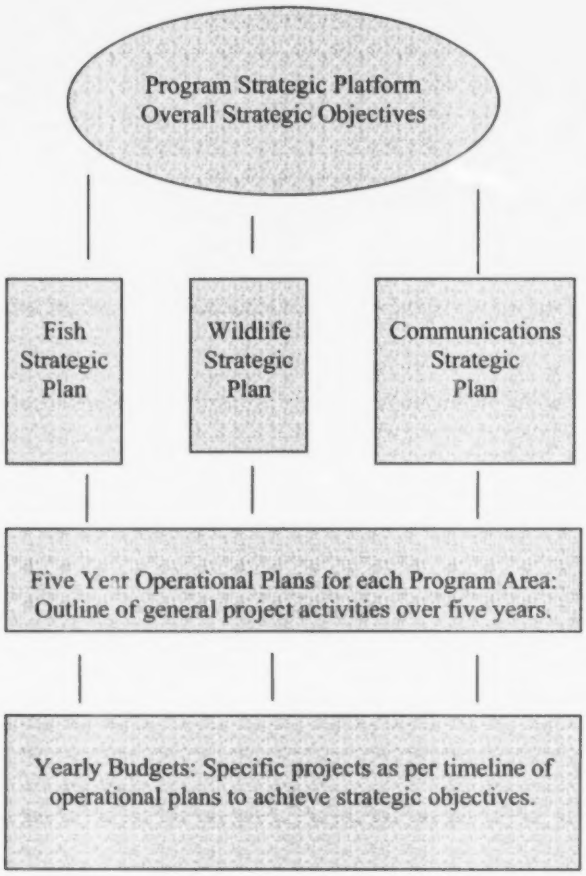
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Figure 1: Relationship of Strategic and Operational Plans for the Compensation Program

IV. HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS: PROJECT PROCESS, PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following section describes how the program is structured and decisions for funding projects are made.

How Does a Project Move through the System from Idea to Implementation

How a project is identified and developed
Project ideas are identified by members of the public, First Nations, other watershed users (resource companies), PWFWCP partners, the Technical Committees and staff. PWFWCP staff members consult with Technical Committee members to develop project ideas into scientifically defensible projects. Projects must align with the PWFWCP's Strategic Platform and goals/objectives of program partners, and Program Strategic and Operational Plans.

How decisions are made on projects and how budgets are approved
The Technical Committee and staff meet annually in November to review and rank all project proposals. Each project is assessed based on its goal, scope and objectives, whether it is technically sound and cost-effective, and articulates a communication plan for reporting results. Projects that are not funded in any given year can be resubmitted in following years with modifications made to reflect any comments of the Technical Committee. Draft budgets are prepared in December as a result of the preceding process and are presented to the PWFWCP Steering Committee for approval by February 15 to allow for start of the new fiscal year on April 1.

How the program communicates on projects internally and externally: reporting
Monthly and quarterly reports are used to communicate between staff and the Technical and Steering Committees. Annual program reports are also prepared, which summarize the year's projects/accomplishments and provide budget accounts. Technical and annual reports are kept in the PWFWCP office in Prince George.

Who Does What: Roles and Responsibilities

Due to the joint management by BC Hydro and MWALP, and the diverse nature of tasks associated with running this program, several committees were struck to deal with different levels of decision-making and technical advice.

Policy Committee
The program's Policy Committee approves changes to the PWFWCP mandate and is called upon only in extra-ordinary circumstances.

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee consist of two representatives each from BC Hydro and MWLAP and directs the development, approval and evaluation of the PWFWCP Strategic Platform. This

committee also approves each Fish and Wildlife strategic plan, the Communication and Cooperation strategy, and the annual operating plans and budgets.

Technical Committee
The Fish and the Wildlife Technical Committees are the actual working committees and give technical direction and review. They are comprised of fisheries and wildlife biologists of the MWLAP and BC Hydro. Both technical committees are responsible for developing five-year strategic plans, for generating, reviewing and assessing project proposals and contracts, and for reviewing and approving technical reports. Members also provide staff with technical direction and technical supervision, and may be assisted by technical advisors, or a section head and/or regional MWALP representative who specialize in either the fish or wildlife disciplines.

Program Staff
In essence, the PWFWCP is delivered by its five staff members. Once the Technical Committee approves a project, it is carried out by program staff, under the direction of a senior biologist. He/she manages the budget and program goals, provides technical direction and support for Program staff, and ensures the technical quality in reports. Administrative staff at the program headquarters with BC Hydro in Hudson's Hope are responsible for personnel administration and performance planning.

V. CONTACT INFORMATION

For general information about the program, please visit: www.bchydro.com/pwcp/

If you have specific questions, please contact:

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